

OPINION 2267 (Case 3492)***Heliconius tristero* Brower, 1996 and *Heliconius melpomene mocoa* Brower, 1996 (Lepidoptera: NYMPHALIDAE): suppression of *Heliconius melpomene bellula* Brown, 1979 not approved**

Abstract. The Commission has ruled that the application for the proposed conservation of the species-group names *Heliconius tristero* Brower, 1996 and *Heliconius melpomene mocoa* Brower, 1996 (Lepidoptera: NYMPHALIDAE) for mimetic butterflies from the Putumayo region of southeastern Colombia by suppressing the senior name *Heliconius melpomene bellula* Brown, 1979 is not approved.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Insecta; Lepidoptera; NYMPHALIDAE; *Heliconius*; *Heliconius tristero*; *Heliconius melpomene mocoa*; *Heliconius melpomene bellula*; butterflies; Colombia.

Ruling

- (1) It is hereby ruled that the application for the proposed suppression of the name *Heliconius melpomene bellula* Brown, 1979 is not approved.
- (2) No names are placed on the Official Lists or Indexes in this ruling.

History of Case 3492

An application to conserve the species-group names *Heliconius tristero* Brower, 1996 and *Heliconius melpomene mocoa* Brower, 1996 (Lepidoptera: NYMPHALIDAE) for mimetic butterflies from the Putumayo region of southeastern Colombia by suppressing the senior name *Heliconius melpomene bellula* Brown, 1979, was received from Andrew V.Z. Brower (*Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN, U.S.A.*) on 10 April 2009. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 66: 256–260 (September 2009). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. No comments were received on this case.

Decision of the Commission

On 1 September 2010 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 66: 258. At the close of the voting period on 1 December 2010 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes – 10: Ballerio, Brothers, Halliday, Harvey, Lamas, Minelli, Papp, Winston, Yanega and Zhou.

Negative votes – 13: Bogutskaya, Bouchet, Grygier, Kojima, Kottelat, Kullander, Lim, Pape, Patterson, Rosenberg, Štys, van Tol and Zhang.

Fautin and Krell abstained. Alonso-Zarazaga, Ng and Pyle were on leave of absence.

Grygier, voting AGAINST, said this Case was premature, inasmuch as it pertained to very recent, ongoing and still unstable taxonomy, and because the hypothetical other 'parent' taxon (besides *tristero*) of the supposedly hybrid holotype of *bellula*

had not been confirmed. Whether that taxon exists, and whether it proves to be a subspecies of *tristero* or a different species entirely, would have a bearing on the availability of *bellula*, as paragraph 5 already suggested (N.B.: 'species' in line 6 of that paragraph should be 'subspecies'). Kottelat, voting AGAINST, was also disappointed in the case and felt it was confused and conjectural. He said that this was a taxonomic rather than a nomenclatural issue. Unless and until demonstrated, the hybrid hypothesis remained only a hypothesis, which was not a reason to suppress a name. He also commented that it was hard to imagine that a name first created in 1996 was now so important that it could not disappear.

No names are placed on Official Lists or Indexes and the issue is left open for subsequent workers to follow the precepts of the Code or to make new proposals to the Commission.